

Bureau of Land Management Ecoregional Assessment and Implementation**Susan Gianettino Interview****June 11, 2010****INTERIOR COLUMBIA BASIN ECOSYSTEM MANAGEMENT PLAN (ICBEMP)**

She was Deputy State Director in Idaho. Worked on the ICBEMP.

How and why of landscape-scale assessments and planning

See Ed Shepard

She had seen the need to use landscape assessments back when she was a Forest Supervisor on the Wasach/Cache Forest. The example she gave is of trying to do fire management without a large landscape assessment as a foundation. You can't manage fire (i.e. burning) and talk about restoring processes without that landscape scale foundation.

A scientific assessment provides a context that was appropriate to disclose and consider the implications of actions.

SCALE:

See Ed Shepard

On ICBEMP, they developed a huge ecoregional assessment that morphed into ecoregional direction. It was too large for management. The assessment was too large for all the other issues other than fish. The governance was convoluted with politics of place.

ROLE OF SCIENTISTS/MANAGERS/RESOURCE SPECIALISTS

On ICBEMP, the scientists had one huge organization that was separate from the direction team. They were off doing their own thing.

Jack Ward Thomas wanted a wall between the scientists and management. He didn't want any undue influence on the scientist. He felt that science should be given free reign. She agrees that science should not be influenced by managers, but managers need to be at the table.

There were all kinds of reports coming out of ICBEMP. It was an incredible assemblage of analysis and modeling. The scientists would go off on their own. It drove the managers nuts.

She was the team lead for the team of managers, which was akin to a management steering committee. There were 3 regional foresters, 3 state directors, and representatives from NOAA, EPA and FWS.

Out of ICBEMP came the premise that your guidance would come from the assessment. You would scale from project to watershed to subregional to region.

ROLE OF THE PUBLIC:

See Ed Shepard

Translating assessment and planning process into day-to-day management

ROLE OF SCIENTISTS/MANAGERS/RESOURCE SPECIALISTS

She also was the lead for the advisory team for implementation, which had about 6-8 fixed personnel comprised of forest supervisors and BLM managers. She also led a team that developed the EIS, which was comprised of about 30 people.

In ICBEMP, they amended 72 LUP – tried to make them outcome based, not directive. They completed the draft EIS and supplemental EIS. It was never signed and put into effect.

The dilemma they faced with ICBEMP was that plans couldn't be done because there was a tension between the new direction in the agency – which was to make plans more outcome based, and the requirements from NOAA fisheries and EPA that plans be prescriptive. The regulatory agencies were requiring more direction in plans than was warranted. Every place is unique, and it didn't make sense to tell them how to manage in each area, but rather what to manage toward and let them work out the details.

She worked with other managers to develop the strategy and organizational structure to implement the assessment. It was wonderful in concept, but impossible in process.

They had a hierarchical analysis of issues – which dictated how detailed and how prescriptive.

There were 2 scales of analysis, the sub-basin and the watershed. They used the landscape assessment as the context, and looked at the implications of decisions on these.

Management needs to be appropriately scaled to issues, but also balanced with considering the social, cultural, and political issues.

Tom Quigley – was the science consultant who led the assessment. He would know a lot more about how they did the assessment.

The EIS team did some effects analysis – some of the scientists were involved in the effects analysis. So in addition to the assessment, some of the scientists moved into decision making roles. There were huge debates over interpretation of science in the decision context.

ROLE OF THE PUBLIC:

See Ed Shepard

What worked and didn't work??

What worked well:

- *The real value of ICBEMP was creating the mindset of thinking at an ecological landscape scale. That is really the greatest value of doing the assessments. It is about a process as much as a product. It is more about developing that mindset.*

What didn't work:

- *The real success in ICBEMP was not the ecoregional direction. They had a purposeful meltdown in direction. They have not yet perfected the scaling for planning.*

Lessons Learned – What would you do next time?

- Framing the key science questions has to emerge out of a dialogue between the managers and the scientists. It must be an iterative process where the managers try to identify management questions, and then the scientists help them refine the question and tell them if they are missing important things. You have to think about the decisions the managers are trying to make and the kind of questions they need to answer to frame the science questions. The scientists need to know this.
- TNC has lots of assessments, but they are at the wrong scale or they don't fit what you need to make a decision. An assessment must fit with what you need to make a decision.
- In the past, we used flat maps and looked at the landscape in a one dimensional way. It doesn't capture the fluidity across both temporal and spatial dimensions. It is really a multi-dimension, multi-variant context. The boundaries are not firm – the boundaries for management must change relative to the issues. The boundaries are fuzzy, they are shades of grey around the core of what you are studying.

Technology now allows us to be more fluid and to use a dynamic temporal and spatial scale as a frame of analysis. These tools should be used as part of the assessment and decision support framework for the direction.

- You have to continue to emphasize that it's about the journey, not the destination.
- One of the lessons learned was that you need to differentiate between those issues that need to be considered and managed across jurisdictional boundaries, such as fire, invasives, and anadromous fish, from those issues that are broad in scale, but don't need to be managed across jurisdictions.

Key Assumptions

Assumption		True	False	Explanation
ECOREGIONAL ASSESMENTS must be:				
1.	Focused on key questions			Yes - this needs to be an iterative dialogue between the managers and the scientists. They need to influence each other to frame the science questions.
2.	Grounded in conceptual models linking key attributes and change agents			Yes. You have to have that some dynamism and fluidity in the conceptual models and the modeling.
3.	Focused on synthesizing existing information not on collecting new information or on conducting research			Yes. – and identify information gaps/needs. Instead of arguing over who decides the right science, use all the information that everybody has and assemble it all together. Use conflicting information to model and discuss the system .
4.	Transparent			Transparency and involvement. You need to get the will of the politicals – must connect to their back yard.
5.	Approached as an ongoing process not as a one-time ad hoc effort (regions and units of analysis must be systematically defined, data must be managed)			Yes.
6.	Scaled to address landscape issues but not too large to be politically unmanageable			Different issues lead to different boundaries, drivers and secondary issues. There will be multiple scales. Use a scaled hierarchical subanalysis that goes from basin-wide, to upper salmon, to watershed. Use GIS to do a multi-dimensional analysis of multiple moving windows – to address multiple issues at multiple scales.
7.	Informative not decisional			Yes. The scientist should not be policy makers.

Assumption		True	False	Explanation
8.	Other			
ECOREGIONAL DIRECTION must be:				
9.	Developed through an iterative process involving multiple organizational levels Developed through a collaborative process to the extent cross-jurisdictional action is required			Yes.
10.	Consistent with the public disclosure, public participation, and interagency coordination requirements associated with planning and environmental impact assessments			It needs to be collaborative, but the decision-makers need to say “this is what we need to know to make decisions.” The process needs to be focused on the decision context. People need to know WHAT decisions are being made, HOW are decisions being made, and how does this all fit together.
11.	Grounded in agency mission and authority			Yes.
12.	Built on existing agency work processes such as land use planning, use authorization, budgeting, and project design and implementation			This is a huge tension. The way the agencies make decisions –does not lend to moving from assessment into planning. The decision process and the way it works is chunked – which is not consistent with the assessment. When the current planning process comes back to the public and industry – they know how to work the existing processes. You have to show the public how the assessments work so they can figure out how they are influencing the decisions. The planning process should be flexible and context driven. Set out a framework for how decisions

Assumption		True	False	Explanation
				are made, and use a checklist such as look at this, and use this kind of process, be sure you have the right players, and use best available science. It is good if you can use a web-based decision-support framework. Use modeling to do the step-down. The more transparent for resource managers and public, the better.
13.	Other			
MANAGEMENT must have the opportunity to:				
14.	Identify the key management questions the assessment will answer			Yes – the scientists and the public should be involved. In the field, the resource specialists may be the scientists. The field must have influence to get buy-in.
15.	Participate in critical decision points during the assessment process and in the development of ecoregional direction			Fundamental. The agency needs to stop doing business for a while – have kind of a stand-down if you will, and build this kind of mindset into what they do. It won't work until everybody understands this new way of doing business. There was a lot of conflict internally. Forest supervisors and field people didn't like outsiders coming in to say what should happen. You need to deal with the internal conflict first. If not, then it will all coming oozing out the pores when you start working with the public. That's when internal conflicts come out.
16.	Other			
FIELD RESOURCE specialists must have the opportunity to:				
17.	Validate and supplement the assessment information with finer-scaled local information			Yes. If the field doesn't support and have a chance to give input, you won't get anywhere.
18.	Help define how			Yes.

Assumption		True	False	Explanation
	assessment information may be used in day to day management activities			
19.	Other			
<i>PARTNERS must have the opportunity to:</i>				
20.	Help identify the key management questions the assessment will answer			Other agency partners – the state and other federal agencies – and scientists and constituencies must all be able to contribute. It must be fully transparent.
21.	See their work incorporated into the assessment where appropriate			Yes, but they need to know where you are headed and what your expectations are up front. What are the sideboards. Be clear about who is making the decisions and explain what you need to know to make the decision.
22.	Help develop ecoregional direction			The partners don't have a role in developing the direction. They can be on a FACA committee that makes recommendations, but the responsible agencies need to make the decisions. Ideally, all the agencies will have similar missions. Seen examples of common agendas. But all the agencies have difference cultures and bottom lines and decision processes.
23.	Other			
<i>What other suggestions do you have for an effective process and use</i>				
24.				
25.				Instead of saying this is cool or current, you need to show that this is absolutely right to look at the larger context for management. You need to have people evaluate "how would we do things differently? How would we make our decisions processes and budget processes work differently if we have this broad-scale analysis? It is useless to work only with state directors. It must be embraced at multiple levels. People need to see why this makes sense – and then ask "How should we do business?"

